

REMARKS

Prior to this Amendment, claims 1-16 were pending. Claims 1-16 stand rejected in the Office Action dated March 14, 2007. The rejection of all pending claims was deemed final. Following the present Amendment in the concurrently filed Request for Continuing Examination, claims 1-16 have been canceled without prejudice and new claims 17-36 are added. Consideration of new claims 17-36 is requested.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended in the telephonic interview conducted June 6, 2007. The Examiner's bases for rejection and Response to Arguments as stated in the March 14, 2007 Office Action were generally discussed with particular emphasis on claim 1 and the limitations of "nominal illumination angle" and "complementary" angle. The cited prior art references Dana and Takagi were generally discussed. Agreement as to the allowability of claim 1 was not reached.

Respecting new claims 17-36, with the exception of dependent claim 25, the limitation respecting nominal illumination angle has been eliminated rendering that basis of the final rejection moot as to all but dependent claim 25.

New independent claims 17, 26 and 30 include the limitation of an illumination panel having a planar illuminating surface. Support for this limitation is included in figures 3-5 and specification paragraphs 10, 11, 18, 25, 27-29. New independent claims 17, 26 and 30 further include a limitation of illumination at a substantially constant angle of incidence. Support for this limitation is found in specification paragraphs 18, 20, 21, 23, 25 and figure 3.

Applicant notes that none of the references cited in the March 14, 2007 Office Action teaches or suggests an apparatus or method that provides illumination at a substantially constant angle of incidence across the surface of an object to be viewed or inspected. For example, U.S. Patent Publication No. US 2002/0080357 to Dana, as best seen in figures 1 and 2, provides a radiation or illumination source having angles of incidence that vary over the focal point or area of interest on the object. These varying angles of incidence are also seen in cited references U.S. Patent No. 5,166,985 to Takagi et al. in figures 3a, 3b, 11 and 12, and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0181231 to Luk in figures 1a-7, 9, 10, 12a-12d, 14-15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23-

24, 30.


With respect to claims 24 and 35, Applicant notes that the limitation of "complementary" pertaining to angles is intended to mean the customary trigonometric meaning that two angles are complementary if their sum is 90 degrees. If the Examiner wishes for Applicant to provide a reference source, Applicant will do so. Support for this definition is found in specification paragraphs 11, 23, 26 and figure 3.

It is respectfully submitted this Amendment has antecedent basis in the Application as originally filed, including the specification, claims and drawings, and that this Amendment does not add any new subject matter to the Application. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment places the Application in suitable condition for allowance; notice of which is requested.

If the Examiner feels that prosecution of the present Application can be expedited by way of an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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